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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

PERSONAL

15 May 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR DCI

SUBJECT: Support to Military Operations

As might be expected, since I became the DNRO I have been concerning myself with what our posture and relationships should be with respect to serving operational military needs via satellite reconnaissance. This issue pervades a substantial number of institutional relationships which I have and I have been uneasy about the soundness of the history, conventional theory, and practices which characterize NRO participation in this process. I have, therefore, been holding fairly extensive dialogue within the Department of Defense to seek a formula which would provide for a more substantial NRO role.

In particular I have been exploring two separate ideas:

First, at the present time, I am charged, on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, to develop, acquire, and operate satellite reconnaissance systems solely in response to your requirements using resources located within the NFIP. Although there are case-by-case exceptions [redacted]

[redacted] it is the rule not the exceptions that characterize the NRO. If Defense were to contemplate a satellite reconnaissance system such as, for example, [redacted]

[redacted] present Defense practices leave the leadership of such an effort straddled between the Services. I believe both Defense and Intelligence would be better served if the DNRO were expected to lead such an effort and I find considerable sympathy for that view.

The second issue has to do with the dissemination of products [redacted] As DNRO I can look to DIRNSA as the agent who concerns himself with the processing, reporting and dissemination of SIGINT products including to the operating commands. Now that we are moving with [redacted] capabilities, current support to operating forces is more attractive. However, when one examines the architecture we

NRO review(s)  
completed.

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have and are procuring for this function it is unsettling. Gene Tighe has suggested that the DNRO should accept responsibility at least for defining the system architecture needed down to the U&S and allied commands and defining the technical interfaces for the next echelon down.

As of this date, the results of these discussions are not very conclusive. The Services and OSD staff agencies view this with mixed emotion; most everyone agrees that something more progressive should be done but are skeptical of the NRO's "national" associations.

I have been delaying discussion with you until I was clearer about what, if anything, might jell in Defense. Although that still isn't happening very fast, there has been enough internal Defense discussion to make me uneasy about our lack of dialogue. Therefore, if your time priority will support an hour on the subject, I think it would be worthwhile to exchange views for awhile.

Regards,

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